


OLC

OLC-78-5342/1
18 October 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR : See Distribution
FROM : S. D. Breckinridge
SUBJECT : Draft Response for Chairman, HSCA

1. Attached (Tab A) is a draft letter for the signature of the DCI to the Chairman of the House Select Committee on Assassinations. Also attached (Tab B) is the letter to which it responds.

2. As the contents of the letter are of substantive interest to a number of elements, it is hoped to have it reviewed, corrections made where appropriate, and coordination completed in time for it to be sent the first of next week. Therefore, it is requested that you review it and provide representation at a meeting in Room 6E13 (IG Conference Room) at 0930, Friday, 20 October. A meeting will provide a better opportunity to achieve the necessary coordination in the time desired.


S. D. Breckinridge

Attachments:
Tabs A & B as stated

Distribution:

- 1 - C/PCS/LOC, Mr. Gregg
- 1 - Mr. Shepanek (PCS/LOC)
- 1 - Mr. Holmes
- 1 - D/Security (Mr. Reardon)
- 2 - C/LA Division (Messrs. Sturbitts, Hawkins)
- 2 - D/Technical Services (Mr. Brandwein, Jean Turoff)
- 1 - SA/DDCI
- 1 - OLC/Subject
- 1 - OLC/Chrono

MORI/CDF Document ID 284707

This document may be downgraded to unclassified when detached from attachment.

EX-IMPORT CL BY 13190

SECRET

SECRET

Honorable Louis Stokes, Chairman
Select Committee on Assassinations
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of 13 October 1978, which we have classified Secret. It would be appreciated if you would mark your copy of the letter accordingly and give it appropriate handling.

I would like to commence by stating that you have been misadvised about what Agency files disclose. Further, while the statements in Mr. Scott's draft manuscript are disturbing, if reliable, they are judged by Agency personnel to be inaccurate in important respects. As he is deceased, he cannot be questioned to clarify the basis for his draft statements, but we believe that the record provides the basis for judging them.

First, there was no pulse camera ("impulse" camera is not the correct terminology) opposite the entrance to the Cuban Consulate until December 1963. Your investigators have seen the documentation recording this fact. In fact, there had been no photographic coverage of the Consulate entrance for some two years prior to the visit of Lee Harvey Oswald to Mexico City. Your investigators have seen the documentation of this statement. The Consulate entrance was opened around 20 September, and 27 September was scheduled as the day for installation of photographic equipment for coverage of the entrance. Difficulty was experienced in the

SECRET

SECRET

installation and the technicians had to machine a part for the equipment. Your investigators have seen the documentation on which these statements are based. The technicians probably had to return to their shop to make the part in question. On that date, or at some date not long afterwards, there was test photography of the entrance; that photography has been reviewed by your investigators. They also have seen documentation stating that photographic coverage of the Consulate did not commence until some time in October. There is no question about the sequence set forth above, or that the records on which the above summary is based have been seen by your investigators.

Oswald is believed to have visited the Cuban Consulate (not the Embassy) twice on Friday, 27 September 1963. In the absence of photographic coverage on that date there were no pictures of him. He also is believed to have visited the Cuban Consulate once the following day (28 September). For the reasons noted above there were no photographs taken on that day. So, for the three times that Oswald is believed to have visited the Cuban Consulate while in Mexico City there was no photography because of lack of coverage.

Oswald's likely schedule on Friday, 27 September 1963, is worth considering. First, the Warren Commission fixed the time of his arrival in Mexico City by bus about 1000. He first registered at a hotel about eight blocks from the bus station, where it can be assumed he cleaned up after his long overnight bus trip. The employee with whom he dealt at the Cuban Consulate stated that his first visit there was that morning, so he probably moved fairly promptly in this portion of the day. What he did

SECRET

SECRET

between that visit and his first visit to the Soviet installation is not known, but known times provide a basis for approximating the afternoon visits.

Of the photographic coverage of the Soviet Embassy, only the photography of one of the two cameras still exists today. As such material constitutes a working aid, seldom of lasting value, it is surprising that any of it survived. The last picture taken by that camera that day was at 1146. Oswald did not appear in that photography so it is safe to say he did not go there prior to that time. ~~In any event, he is reported as going first to the Cuban Consulate in the morning, although the time is not known.~~ Later in the day, at 1605, he was back at the Cuban Consulate. This is known because it is the time of a telephone call from the Cuban Consulate to the Soviet Consulate, in which it is now clear that Oswald was the subject of the call. In that telephone conversation he was described as having just arrived from the Soviet installation (about a five-minute walk away). He was still at the Cuban Consulate ^{at} 1626, the time of a telephone call from the Soviet installation to the Cuban Consulate, again about Oswald. He would seem to have been at the Soviet installation between 1500 and 1600.

On the following day, Saturday, 28 September, Oswald seems to have visited the Soviet installation twice, and the Cuban Consulate once. Again, this is based on telephone surveillance. At 1151 the Cuban Consulate phoned the Soviets stating that the subject of the conversation (now believed to have been Oswald) had just been to the Soviet installation, and concluded with the report that he was en route back to the Soviet Consulate. There was no photographic coverage of the Soviet installation on that weekend so there is no photography of him.

SECRET

SECRET

From the foregoing it is clear that at the time of the visits (probably six in number, all on Friday and Saturday, 27 and 28 September 1963) Oswald did not enter or leave either entrance when there was photographic coverage. It was on the basis of telephone surveillance that the above schedule was first determined. Although the transcripts of the above telephone conversations had been retained, there had been no occasion to identify the subject of these earlier calls with anyone, until after the assassination of President Kennedy.

On the morning of 1 October (a Tuesday, the day before Oswald left Mexico City) Oswald phoned the Soviet Embassy at 1031. He was referred to the Consulate section which he phoned at 1035. In these conversations he identified himself as Lee Oswald. It was this telephone call, in which he gave his name, that triggered a routine report to Washington about an American seeking a visa to the Soviet Union. That was the central fact at the time, and it was reported. Accompanying the cabled report was descriptive information possibly of the man in question, Oswald. It was based mistakenly on a photograph of a man entering the Soviet Embassy. The description of that man did not fit Oswald, but that photograph continued for some time to be believed in Mexico City Station to be a picture of Oswald. While subsequently it became clear to those involved in the investigation that the man photographed was not Oswald, it has continued to intrude into the memories and understandings of many of those who have become involved in reviewing the matter. There are persons known to us, and known to be known to your investigators, who continued

SECRET

SECRET

to confuse that early mistaken identification as photography of Oswald. Had Oswald not identified himself in the telephone call on 1 October, the issue would never have arisen.

The 1 October 1963 telephone call does serve another purpose, apparently overlooked by some. Oswald, in speaking to the Soviet official, who received the call, identified himself (in addition to giving his name) as having been at the Soviet installation the previous Saturday (28 September), inquiring about a visa. The person with whom he spoke acknowledged that fact. The Soviet Embassy in Mexico City was to have cabled the Soviet Embassy in Washington, and Oswald was inquiring if there had been a reply. That exchange is relevant to current consideration of his movements. There is no indication of visits by Oswald to either the Cuban or Soviet installations after the visits on Friday and Saturday, 27 and 28 September. As he had been turned away at both places, the only business remaining to be transacted, if at all, would depend on a reply to the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City, from the Soviet Embassy in Washington. When Oswald stated (on Tuesday, 1 October) that he had been there Saturday, he was saying in effect that the Saturday visit was the last time he had been there. It confirms the conclusion that he visited only on the previous Friday and Saturday.

It remains a fact that the investigative leads about Oswald's key contacts during his visit to Mexico City came from CIA. It was the telephone coverage that made it possible to identify the Mexican employee of the Cuban Consulate with whom Oswald dealt, which led to the Mexican authorities questioning her. Her testimony essentially corroborated CIA analysis of

SECRET

SECRET

Oswald's visits, noted above, so it was not necessary to expose the telephone surveillance. We consider this ability to provide such information on a man, who was a nonentity at the time of his visit, something of an achievement. That seems to have been overlooked in the face of questions that we believe have been convincingly answered. What more could have been done is doubtful.

CIA is not able to conduct police-type investigations abroad, because of the cover status of its employees. Its personnel and assets in a foreign land usually are focused specially on foreign intelligence targets. We were able in this case to get the Mexican authorities to question the person with whom Oswald dealt, although we were not in a position to interview her ourselves. In the period following the investigation by the Warren Commission, as further reports emerged, they were duly disseminated to the FBI, but--quite frankly--they were not of the same key significance as the above reporting, nor of certain relevance or the same reliability.

I must add my concern to that expressed by you, although the concern is not over whether CIA has provided ²¹¹ available information ^{in response} ~~that answers~~ ~~to your requests~~ ~~the questions in your letter~~. We believe that the record is clear that:

(1) information on Oswald's visits to the Cuban and Soviet facilities came from CIA; (2) that CIA coverage established both the schedule of these contacts, and the means for verifying them; (3) that as there was no photographic coverage of the installations that he entered, at the time that he entered them, there could be no pictures. The records of this are quite clear, and have been made available to your investigators.

My concern is that we have been aware for some time that it was at least

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

an initial working hypothesis on the part of some of your investigators that there was some connection between CIA and Oswald (there was none) and that CIA suppressed evidence of Oswald's comings and goings in Mexico City, for speculated reasons that have not been made clear to us. To the contrary, the files and recollections of those we have interviewed, who were directly familiar with the detail, make it clear that there was no CIA-Oswald tie, and that there was no suppression of evidence on his visit to Mexico City. As for Mr. Scott's statements, we believe these later recollections on his part to be very much in error. They certainly are inconsistent with what he, and the activities for which he was responsible in 1963 and 1964, reported to the FBI and the Warren Commission. The only ~~possible~~ exception to this statement was the mistaken identity of the photograph noted above.

I can only reiterate that the records are surprisingly complete. We do not consider them to be inconsistent; in fact read objectively and thoroughly they convey a clear and direct story. After a decade and a half, they retain administrative trivia that one might have expected to be destroyed by now. Perhaps that is just as well, as they supply convincing refutation of the ideas advanced by your investigators.

Yours sincerely,

STANSFIELD TURNER

cc: Honorable Richardson Preyer
Honorable Samuel Devine

CONFIDENTIAL